

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 ( ISO ) W

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9616

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 0163

E.O. 11652

TAGS MASS, MT, US

SUBJECT: M-16'S

REF: STATE 006701

1. FOLLOWING RESPONSES KEYED TO PARAS OF REFERENCE AND REPRESENT OUR BEST ESTIMATES. GUATEMALAN GENERAL STAFF ITSELF DOES NOT YET HAVE CONCRETE PLANS ON DISTRIBUTION OF WEAPONS.

A. WE BELIEVE ALL M16'S DESTINED FOR ACTIVE FORCES ONLY TO REPLACE M-1 RIFLE AND M-1 CARBINES. TACTICAL GROUP OF AIR FORCE AND NAVAL INFANTRY WOULD PROBABLY BE GIVEN EQUAL PRIORITY WITH ARMY. ACTIVE FORCES TOTAL APPROXIMATELY 13,000. SOME M-16'S MIGHT BE PROVIDED TO THE MOBILE MILITARY POLICE. OUR RECORDS INDICATE THAT 14,800 .30 CALIBRE RIFLES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO THE GUATEMALAN ARMED FORCES UNDER MAP OVER THE YEARS.

B. BASED ON PAST PRACTICE, WE ESTIMATE APPROXIMATELY FIVE PERCENT OF TOTAL WILL BE HELD FOR ATTRITION, MAINTENANCE FLOAT AND DIRECT EXCHANGE.

C. PURCHASE OF M-16'S ACCORDING TO OUR BEST INFORMATION REPRESENTS GOG DECISION TO REARM ACTIVE ARMED FORCES WITH STANDARD MODERN RIFLE. THE BEST OF THE M-1 RIFLES RENDERED SURPLUS WILL PROBABLY BE ISSUED TO RESERVE FORCES AND THE MILITARY CADETS OF THE FIVE ADOLFO V HALL INSTITUTES, WHICH ARE SPONSORED AND PARTIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. RESERVE UNITS WITH VARIOUS DEGREES OF ORGANIZATION, EXIST IN ALL DEPARTMENTS. STRENGTH ESTIMATES VARY FROM 20-35 THOUSAND, WITH PERHAPS 5000 ENGAGED IN PERIODIC DRILLS. THE ADOLFO V HALL INSTITUTES HAVE AN AVERAGE ENROLLMENT OF  
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1200 STUDENTS.

D. DURING PAST YEAR ARMY WAS INCREASED BY 2 RIFLE COMPANIES. AN INCREASE IN NAVAL INFANTRY (MARINES) STRENGTH FROM ONE FIVE PLATOON COMPANY TO A BATTALION OF THREE COMPANIES HAS BEEN GIVEN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE APPROVAL. AIR FORCE PLANS TO ADD APPROXIMATELY 200-300 PERSONNEL AS RESULT OF ARAVA PURCHASES.

E. DECISION ON PURCHASE OF M-16'S AND THE QUANTITIES REQUESTED WAS APPARENTLY MADE AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOG WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH TECHNICIANS OR LOGISTICS STAFF. THE QUANTITY PROBABLY REPRESENTS BEST ESTIMATE AT THAT LEVEL OF ONE FOR ONE REQUIREMENT FOR REPLACEMENT OF .30 CALIBRE RIFLES IN THE SYSTEM. OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT FIGURE OF 15,000 ALSO USED IN RECENT CONTACTS WITH GERMANS, ISRAELIS, BELGIANS AND FRENCH.  
MELOY

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